

MY DEAR SIR,

IT was my intention, in common with the rest of the Professors, to have taken no part in the approaching election. To this conclusion we were led by the conviction, that the Trustees are so well acquainted with the character and merits of the several Candidates, as to render any interposition of advice or recommendation, on our parts, unnecessary. But, from this line of conduct, so agreeable to us on many accounts, I am driven by considerations, which will sufficiently appear, in the progress of this address.

It has been mentioned to me, that among the documents submitted to the Trustees by Dr. Hare, is a letter which I wrote to you on a former occasion, relative to his qualifications to teach chemistry. On the propriety of his printing this, without consulting me, I shall not make a single remark. This is a matter which I leave to himself. But, painful as the discussion will prove, I cannot be silent, on the motives which influenced him to the measure, or allow my letter any longer to be perverted to the purposes which I am told it is.

Having declined from a sense of duty, to support him in his present application, I learn, that the letter has been brought forward and distributed, with a view of convicting me of such an inconsistency, as may impair or destroy the influence which he does me the honor to suppose I possess.

As very many years have elapsed since I have seen the letter,* I do not know precisely what are its contents. But I distinctly recollect, and I am sure you will also, the circumstances under which it was drawn from me.

Alarmed at the general opposition made to him, in consequence of his not being a physician, several of his friends waited on me with a request, that I would in writing express my opinion on the necessity of a *medical* education to a Lecturer on Chemistry to a *medical* class. To this abstract proposition I replied, without hesitation, that I did not think it was, and supported my views of the subject, by some examples of distinguished teachers. No part of this declaration am I disposed to retract, or modify. It was the honest dictate of my judgment, and till I receive new impressions, I shall adhere to it. But I do utterly deny, that I have ever countenanced the notion of the competency of an individual, thus circumstanced, to belong to a *Medical Faculty*, and I challenge any one to adduce a solitary instance, of its having been done in any age or country. The records of medical schools are of easy access, and this is a point which may, at once, be settled. But, in the researches instituted for the purpose, we are not to lose sight of the distinction between *private* Lecturers, and *public* Professors attached to a *Medical Faculty*. Neither Murray, Davy, nor Vauquelin, cases much relied on against me, is an exception. The first is a private Lecturer at Edinburgh; the second, was a Teacher in the Royal Institution in London; and the third, is pretty much in the same capacity as the first, in Paris.

Do you not remember, that it was owing to the difficulties which I stated on this point, that the late Mr. Clymer moved, or caused to have moved, in the Board of Trustees, that Chemistry be taken out of the medical faculty? To show you further, how uniform have been my sentiments on this subject, when on

* The letter I have since seen, and my impression of its contents I find to be correct

406

at a more recent occasion, there was a probability of a vacancy in the Chemical Chair, I earnestly and repeatedly pressed him to unite with some medical man in his application, so that the chair might be properly represented, in the medical faculty. This is known to more than one of our friends.

Even admitting, however, that I now hold a different language, am I never to change an opinion without having the integrity of my motives impeached? Circumstances have since very much altered the state of the school, and, I, who at that time, had no connection with it, was far less adequate to ascertain the bearings and tendencies of the principle on its prosperity and welfare.

But, what, perhaps, you will inquire, are the duties to which he is incompetent? Without descending to details, I will endeavour to acquaint you. The preliminary step, in the examination for degrees, is to divide among the Professors the Theses of the candidates. These are on medical subjects. Each of the Professors carefully reads the Dissertation entrusted to him, interrogates the candidate, so as to be satisfied he has written it, corrects its false doctrines, or modes of practice, if any exist, and finally, approves or rejects it. Being received, he proceeds with the examination on his own branch, and attends to it as carried on by his colleagues, in succession, so that he may be prepared to vote according to the general impression made on his mind by the whole. Candidates excel in certain provinces, and fail in others, and hence it is indispensably necessary that the Professors should have such a knowledge of all the subjects, as to enable them to pronounce an enlightened and discriminating judgment. This is the more important, since, in our school, the candidate is concealed from the faculty, and, without a word being allowed on the merits or demerits of the examination, the ballot is taken, and his fate decided.

Now, permit me, in return, to inquire whether it would be safe or proper to confide these high and responsible duties to any other than a physician; and, indeed, by whom else can they be executed? Nothing has tended more to preserve the ascendancy of our school, amidst all the recent vicissitudes of its fortune, than the superior estimation in which our degrees are held. But, how immensely depreciated will be that diploma, as an attestation of professional merit, which bears the signature of an individual as one of a medical faculty, who is utterly ignorant of even the elements of every practical branch of medicine! Can this be right, or, rather is it not such an outrage on obvious propriety as not to be entertained for a moment? Does not, indeed, the proposition carry with it an air so extravagantly ridiculous and absurd, as, even in the annunciation, to provoke a smile?

It is alleged, however, that I am singular in this opinion, and that it comes from a prejudiced and hostile temper. Do me only the favour to turn to the correspondence which took place between the trustees and medical faculty in the year eighteen hundred and nine, on this subject, and you will find, an exceedingly powerful and well reasoned protest* unanimously signed by the latter against the principle. It is there explicitly declared to be wrong in itself, sanctioned by no precedent, or usage whatever, and if adopted, must be productive of the most pernicious consequences. Every one of the present faculty has

* The following is an Extract from the Protest to which I allude, the whole being too long for insertion.

"In addition to this, it may be observed that we believe Chemistry is taught by Medical Professors in all the universities of Europe, that of Upsal excepted, where the late Sir T. Bergmann was Chemical Professor. But, in Sweden, Chemistry is cultivated principally on account of its application to mineralogy, and the Chemical Professor is not a member of the medical faculty.

"We beg leave again to suggest, that our Professor of Chemistry has always taken an important part in the business of the medical faculty, judging of the qualifications of the respective Candidates in every branch of the Profession, and examining *Inaugural Theses*, on all subjects relating to medicine."

the same impression, and we are not without similar forebodings and solicitude, strengthened, very considerably, by a louder and more indignant expression of medical sentiment and feeling.

But, if deceived in this, where is the evidence of our error? Could it be had, surely those who have evinced so much alacrity, in this respect, would have supplied it. The fact, however, is, that there is not one medical man of any intelligence or respectability who is so insensible to what is due to his profession as to lend his authority to such a purpose. It is known to us all, that the late Dr. Kuhn, whose judgment in such matters cannot be suspected, nor his good will towards Dr. Hare denied, went so far as even to declare, in his resistance to the principle, that from his recollection of our Charter, it would be forfeited by such an election. Not having seen that instrument, I cannot tell whether this is correct. As he, however, never gratuitously hazarded a declaration, it is worth the inquiry, and more particularly so, as such appears to be a very general impression.

Must I say more, to convince you, how exceedingly anxious my mind is on this subject? When I reflect on it, I am indeed serious even to sadness. But, can it be otherwise, having ascertained, as I have done, that from one end of the continent to the other, it engages attention, and every where the whole medical body, practitioners and students, are opposed to the measure. Were it not, that an apprehension prevails that it might be considered by the Trustees as an officious interference, strong remonstrances would be presented to you. We, however, have received the admonitions of the best friends of the school; and, there is no Student who will, or I am greatly mistaken, submit to be examined for a degree, by any other than a regularly educated Physician. They can not so humiliate themselves as to consent that their "quantum meruit" should otherwise be awarded; and as these are the elevated feelings of professional pride and dignity which it has been our study to inculcate, we cannot withhold from them our approbation, or I at least, most cordially yield it. Do not suppose, that in mentioning this fact, I am in any other way influenced than by a desire to express what to you as a Trustee I deem very interesting intelligence. But, I am told, that I procured for Mr. Hare the degree of Doctor in Medicine, and considered it as curing his incapacity in this respect. It is not true. Being exceedingly desirous of the degree, he solicited me to endeavour to have it conferred on him by our own school. But I refused even to suggest it to the Faculty, and then it was, that he made an application to his friends in Harvard College, who declined doing it, owing to the opposition of the medical professors, unless, we would certify, "that the measure was not an improper one."

None of our Faculty except Dr. James and myself, could be induced to do it, and we in the spirit of benevolence, acquiesced though very reluctantly, having some doubts, at the moment, of the propriety of the step. But, how little I thought of the efficacy of this nostrum, will be sufficiently shown, when I assure you that it was after he got it, that I advised his coalition with a medical man in the application to the Trustees, to which I have already alluded. Can that avail, procured from another school, which we most unquestionably would not have granted? Every attempt to incorporate Dr. Hare with the Profession in this city has failed. The alliance is considered by medical men as an unnatural one. They will admit him into none of their associations, though highly respecting him personally, by which a recognition would be given to such a title.

Nevertheless, I do acknowledge that I have sincerely wished him success. At the time, it was my deliberate conviction that he presented the strongest claims, in many particulars, and that the alleged incapa-

city might be removed by lopping chemistry from the medical faculty, a reformation, as regards our school, which my colleagues and myself most ardently desire.

But, without in the slightest degree lowering my former estimate of his qualifications, I do believe there will be a candidate with titles so superior, that independently of some other considerations, which I shall presently notice, were I not to give him the preference, I should feel that I was betraying the interests of the school, and acting with dishonesty and injustice.

It is the Vice Provost of the University to whom I refer. Ever since my return from Europe I have watched, with a lively interest, the progress of this young man. I have found him ardent in the cultivation of physical science, and in all situations exhibiting the finest talents, and the most amiable deportment and manners. Of our learned societies, he is a leading and conspicuous member, and his merits, in some other respects, are officially known to you. Confessedly he has illustrated by an exceedingly brilliant and successful course of lectures, the Chair he holds; and of his attainments in chemistry, I cannot doubt after the display he made in the kindred department of natural philosophy, even were I ignorant of the advantages he commanded, in the schools of this country and of Europe.

Be not content however with what I have said. Confer, on the contrary, with Dr. Coxe, Mr. Correa, Judge Cooper, Mr. Cloud, Dr. Seybert, Dr. Jones, and with the chemists generally of the city. Talk with them, and do not rely on certificates, which are always *ex parte*, and from their very nature bloated with exaggerated praise. Contrast the opinions given of the candidates, and *mark the result*. Called upon, there is scarcely one of us who formerly recommended Mr. Hare, that would not now say, *comparatively*, his pretensions are inferior. Of this opinion too, *there is a clear majority of the Professors*.

But whatever may be the extent of the acquisitions of the Vice Provost, it is still more as a teacher that he is to be valued. No uncommon capacity is required, with the help of the admirable works on the science, and the facilities now afforded by the schools, to accumulate a competent stock of knowledge. Destitute, however, of the ability of imparting it in a popular and attractive guise, what will it avail, as relates to our purpose?

Like the other demonstrative sciences, chemistry exacts, in the teaching of it, the powers of extempore elocution. Need you be told, that the history of every school is pregnant with examples of imperfect success in this province, though there were brought to it the amplest knowledge, great diligence of preparation, and even dexterity in the processes, and manipulations of the laboratory.

That he has this quality, in a very unusual degree, is universally conceded. Disciplined by the severities of the exact sciences, he is distinguished, as a public speaker, by logical precision, clearness of method, and by a style though not ornate or ambitious, neat, didactic, and impressive.

But, I have hinted at other motives, influencing my judgment in this case, and which, as a rule of conduct, seemed to me obligatory. As an act of justice as well as policy, candidates who have already done well in the school, uniformly have been preferred. My own rise, through all the gradations of rank, was owing to the full recognition of the principle, and several other examples of similar import, might be cited.

It is not to be overlooked, that the chair now occupied by the Vice Provost, and which he fills with such eclat, was erected at the special request of Dr. Hare, held by him for a series of years, and then surrendered, without ever having made an effort to demonstrate his own talents, or benefit the University.

Now let me ask you, had he been a physician and signalled himself in this station, whether all the powers on earth could have resisted his promotion to the chemical chair? Taking this for granted, will not the raising of him over the head of the present incumbent have at least the *squinting* of partiality and favoritism. Not less the interests than the honour of the university demand, that even and exact justice be meted, and sure I am that it will be done!

Nine years ago, Mr. Hare presented a case to the trustees, made out and supported by the same documents which he now exhibits. No new matter is introduced of any importance, and it is even weakened by the presages which he then gave, or was thought to give of future excellence not having been since realised to any extent. I mean only to say, that he has since made no new discovery or improvement in Chemistry of which I have heard. On that case the trustees saw good reason to decide against him and in favour of a medical candidate, who, at the time, whatever may be his subsequent merits, most assuredly did not come forward with stronger claims than those of the Vice Provost.

But it is said that the latter, in relation to medical capabilities, has no superiority of pretensions. It is easy to place this matter right. No one will deny that he is a distinguished graduate in medicine, and, though seduced from the practice of it, has always maintained a connection with the profession through the medium of its societies, mingling in their debates, and acting a conspicuous part in all their deliberations and proceedings. Exactly on the same footing, in this respect, will he stand with the celebrated Black of Edinburgh, and his successor Dr. Hope; with the late Dr. Woodhouse, of our school, and Dr. De Butts of that of Baltimore. No one of these professors ever practised medicine. The fact is, so arduous is the teaching of chemistry, that whoever engages in it must withdraw from all other pursuits and occupations, and appropriate to it an undivided attention.

Compared with the opposing candidate, he has among other advantages, that of being in communion with the profession, that he is recognized as a legitimate member of it, has an identity of feelings and sympathies, and is borne along by the full tide of popularity and confidence.

In closing this discussion, I must repeat, that in a technical sense, Mr. Hare is no Doctor. It was his fortune, to be bred in another line. Without any acknowledged superiority, even in a branch hardly associated with the science of medicine, he is endeavouring to break through the fences and enclosures, which protect the peculiar rights and privileges of the profession, and forcibly to seize on its high places and honors. Can it then be wondered at, that the profession should rise up *en masse*, to resist the encroachment?

The Chairs, in this School, are among the few, and, perhaps, the only high rewards of excellence in the several departments of medical science. As yet, they have been consecrated to the profession. Can it be credited, that of the hundreds of the pupils whom we have graduated, no one is to be found adequate to the task of teaching Chemistry? If such a deplorable deficiency really exists, surely it constitutes the best reason, for expunging the branch from the system of medical education, as an expensive and useless incumbrance!

To the medical faculty, the Profession looks, on this occasion, for a manly support of its honor and interests. Entering fully into their views, and sharing in their sensibilities, they shall find, at least in me, one faithful and resolute adherent. To the generous devotion of the Students especially, I owe whatever

I possess that is really of much value, and were I on an occasion, in which they are so deeply concerned, to desert them, I should indeed consider my conduct mean, diminutive, and despicable.

Enough has now been said, in my loose and desultory way, to give you an insight into the motive of my conduct, and to express to you my wishes. As you will be, in the exercise of your suffrage, so have I been controlled by a sacred regard to the interests of the School, compared with which, all other considerations are secondary, and must be sacrificed. The development, though compulsory, has been to me most painful.

But no more of this. Calumniated as I have been, by a most improper representation of my motives in this affair, it was due to my character, as well as to the Trustees, to afford the explanation I have done. It is mortifying that my old friend should have pursued this course.

Bad in itself, it has not even the merit of originality. By a little inquiry, he would have learned, that there is no instance of a candidate, who was not supported to the extent of his wishes, that did not accuse the medical faculty, and in the very language he employs, as regards myself. Whether this is owing to our corruption, or to an exaggerated estimate of their own pretensions, others must determine.

On the charge of *ingratitude*, one word, and I am done. As it is not my practice to record the services which I render my friends, I cannot say on which side the balance stands. The account between us is a long and heavy one. But this is a matter of a personal nature and may, at our leisure, be adjusted. My heart, even now tells me, that I am not wanting in kindness towards him. But, I have still to learn the morality, that would warrant me to draw on the exchequer of a public Institution to discharge my private debts.

As among the oldest, the most steadfast, and affectionate of my friends, I address to you this letter. No human being knows my character so well, or is more able justly to appreciate the motives of my conduct in all cases.

With the highest respect and attachment,

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours, &c. &c.

N. CHAPMAN.

To the Hon. JOSEPH HOPKINSON.

Philadelphia, August 1, 1818.

Book taken apart, leaves deacidified
with magnesium bicarbonate. Folds re-
inforced, leaves mended and supported
with lens tissue where weak. New all-
rag endpaper signatures, unbleached
linen hinges. Rebound in full vellum.
February 1975.

Carolyn Horton & Assoc.
430 West 22 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011

HORTON BINDERY

Med Hist
1W2
210
C4662
1818 C.1

